



Wind River Nursery Site

The Skamania County Coalition is seeking Congressional support for Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler’s Wind River Administrative Site Conveyance Act (H.R 5093). After significant input from the local community and the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), this legislation will convey 28 acres of the Wind River Site from USFS to Skamania County.

Historical Context. In the early 20th Century, the USFS established three administrative sites in Skamania County’s Wind River Valley — the Hemlock Ranger Station, the Wind River Nursery and the Wind River Experiment Station. These three administrative sites operated for nearly 90 years. In the late 1990’s, changing Forest Service priorities led to the closure of the site, and with it a loss of approximately 300 seasonal and full-time jobs within Skamania County. The closure caused significant and lasting negative impacts to the local economy. **Since its closure, many of the structures at the Wind River site have fallen into a deferred maintenance status and a state of disrepair.**

Collaborative Process. Recognizing USFS no longer had a use for or resources to adequately maintain the Wind River Site coupled with Skamania County’s need and desire to create economic development activities, a collaborative effort was initiated to envision a new use for the site that also honored its historic roots. **As such, the Forest Service has already conveyed 187 acres of the Wind River Site, which includes five residential structures. It also entered into several long-term agreements with the County that enabled local county tax dollars to maintain and restore many of the structures.** The arrangement allows the Forest Service to responsibly reduce its maintenance backlog obligations while providing the County with ways to grow its economy and tax revenue.

Skamania County’s Commitment. In partnership with the Wind River Trust the County is committed to its efforts to preserve the historic Wind River campus while restoring a level of economic activity lost when the USFS abandoned the property. **Already, several buildings have been restored at the County’s expense, are leased and generating revenue the County is committed to using to maintain and restore additional sites at Wind River.**

Current Status. The County has made considerable and meaningful progress towards restoring the Wind River Site. **At the County’s expense, these efforts include infrastructure upgrades to the site’s water mains, installation of separate electrical meters on four buildings, and the full restoration of two residential structures with a third currently under contract for lead abatement.** These structures would have fallen into an increased state of disrepair had it not been for the County’s collaborative efforts with the Forest Service.

Skamania Coalition

Wind River Nursery Site

Skamania County has engaged in a collaborative and deliberate effort to develop a long-term plan for the Wind River Site. The County's modest efforts thus far will be scaled up once the conveyance is complete. This will allow the site to be restored for economic development activities while embracing the historic roots of the Wind River Site. The County and its partners envision a two-phase plan.

Phase I

- 4-5 year timeline for completion after conveyance
- Full rehab of additional residential structures
- Improvements to commercial-use structures to address current private sector demand
- Estimates show that once complete, activities will generate \$450,000/year in a net revenue stream—this funding stream can be leveraged for state assistance for additional rehab work.
- Exploration of seasonal camping or RV use to expand recreational access.

Phase II

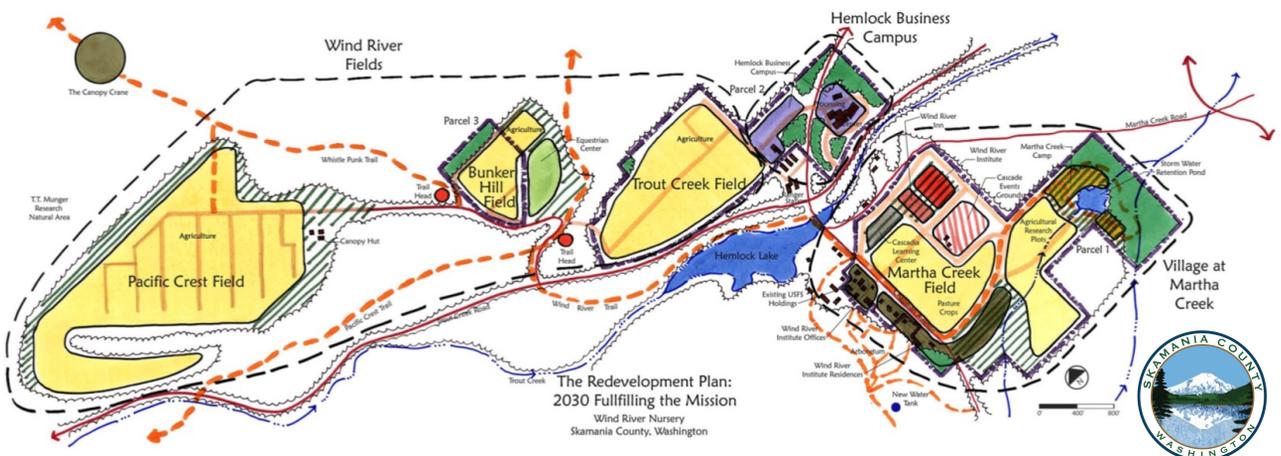
- 5-10 years+ timeline for completion after conveyance
- Creation of Forest Interpretative Center with reproduction of a Forest Service lookout tower
- Creation of a first responder regional training center
- Estimates show that once complete, activities will generate \$600,000/year in a net revenue stream—this funding stream can be leveraged for state assistance for additional rehab work.

Current Uses of Restored Buildings

- Childcare facility
- Residential Housing rentals
- Short-term recreational rentals

Existing Private Sector Interest in Restored Buildings

- Call Center
- Light manufacturing
- Bio-remedial Business
- Metal Fabrication



Contacts:

Kevin Waters, Skamania EDC
503.560.5241
kwaters@skamania-edc.org

David Hodges, CFM Advocates
360.521.1476
davidh@cfmpdx.com